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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Sovereign Lord, Your Kingdom cannot be shaken. Thank You for inviting us to ask and receive, to seek and find, and to knock for doors to be open. Lord, forgive us when we forfeit our blessings because of our failure to ask. Remind us that we have not because we ask not. Inspire our Senators to harness prayer power continuously. May they follow Your admonition to pray without ceasing. Throughout this day, may they repeatedly ask You for wisdom and guidance. May their fervent prayers make a positive impact on the legislative process.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SULLIVAN). The majority leader is recognized.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2016—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 118, H.R. 2685.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The bill clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 118, H.R. 2685, a bill making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

CLOTURE MOTION

Mr. MCCONNELL. I send a cloture motion to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the motion to proceed to H.R. 2685, an act making appropriations for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

Mitch McConnell, John Cornyn, James Lankford, Roger F. Wicker, John Barasso, Thom Tillis, Steve Daines, Tom Cotton, Kelly Ayotte, Lindsey Graham, John McCain, John Thune, Jerry Moran, Richard C. Shelby, Daniel Coats, Jeff Flake, Rob Portman.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, later this afternoon, the Senate will decide whether to advance or filibuster the Defense authorization legislation which is before us. Senators will take a vote and Senators will make a choice. One option is for Senators to follow the bipartisan example of the House of Representatives and the Senate Armed Services Committee, both of which passed Defense authorization legislation with bipartisan backing.

It means reaching across the aisle to support the men and women who support us every single day. It means voting to transform bureaucratic waste into crucial investments for brave troops and their families, raises they have earned, quality-of-life programs they deserve, and the kind of medical care and mental health support they should expect when injured on the bat-

tlefield or haunted by memories at home.

It means ensuring our military has the tools it needs to help America navigate a treacherous world beset by an ever-growing array of challenges. It means advancing a bill that contains ideas and priorities from both parties and one that gives President Obama the exact level of funding authorization he asked for in his own budget request.

It also means endorsing the Senate's return to considering Defense authorization bills through the regular order, allowing real bipartisan debate and a real bipartisan amendment process as we have done this year, as opposed to the bad old days of ramming it through at the last minute. That is one option: voting for cloture, voting for a bipartisan bill that is good for our troops and our country.

But there is another option too: voting to filibuster, voting to raise the curtain on this truly bizarre filibuster summer, a strategy we hear Democratic leaders boasting about in the press. Democratic leaders are apparently so passionate—passionate—about dumping more cash into gargantuan DC bureaucracies like the IRS that they now seem prepared to block and filibuster the benefits owed to our troops and their families or even—shut down the government altogether if they can't get their way.

As one newspaper reported this morning, "Democrats appear eager to return to shutdown politics." The minority leader seemed to put it plainly enough the other day: "We're headed for another shutdown," he said. But that can only happen if commonsense Democrats allow their party leaders to advance the shutdown-seeking filibuster summer gambit.

Today is every commonsense Democrat's chance to say, Enough. This is a bad strategy. Today is every commonsense Democrat's opportunity to help pull their party back from a senseless

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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